


## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

 Dear Editor: After reading Lehman Henry's article on The Area of Rapa Nui (RNJ 8:71-3) I checked some sources of information not mentioned in the article. Following is what I found:

- 1968 *The Columbia Encyclopedia* (3rd ed., 1963)  
(Ninth printing) (p.617)  
c.46 sq. mi (119 sq. km.)
- 1977 *Calendario Atlante de Agostini* (p.685)  
162.5 sq. km (63 sq.mi.)
- 1955 *Diccionario Enciclopédico Abreviado (Espasa):*  
Vol.6 (p.335)  
118 sq. km (46 sq.mi.)
- 1965 Appendix 1 (p.1151)  
179 sq. km. (69 sq.mi.)
- 1975 Appendix 2 (p. 1106)  
162.5 sq km (63 sq. mi.)

As Mr. Henry points out, it appears that encyclopedias update their information from time to time. The well-known and respected *Espasa Abreviado* (at present in 10 volumes) "enlarged" the island between 1955 and 1965, and then "shrank" it between 1965 and 1975.

Dan Gartner, Canberra, Australia.

 Dear Editor,

Thank you for the coverage given me in Easter Island Foundation News (RNJ 8:4, pg. 106). However I would like to correct some of the statements which misrepresent my position at WMF.

I have been a consultant for the WMF Easter Island program since 1978. The emphasis of this program lies in the conservation of the monumental archaeological heritage of the Island. Hence, most of the projects carried out have been developed by CONAF or the Centro Nacional de Restauración y Conservación of Santiago. The only collaborative efforts have been the two meetings that were organized by the three institutions with ICCROM. These were the Reunión para el diagnóstico de la conservación del patrimonio de Isla de Pascua, held in Santiago de Chile, March 1988, and the Lavas and Volcanic Tuffs International Meeting held on the island, October 1990.

I take this opportunity to let you know that the Proceedings of this last meeting are now in print, published by ICCROM in a volume called *Lavas and Volcanic Tuffs*. A copy of this book will certainly be sent to the Mulloy Library.

A. Elena Charola, New York.

## REVIEWS



*Voyage of Rediscovery: A Cultural Odyssey through Polynesia*. Finney, Ben, with Marlene Among, Chad Baybayan, Tai Crouch, Paul Frost, Bernard Kilonsky, Richard Rhodes, Thomas Schroeder, Dixon Stroup, Nainoa Thompson, Robert Worthington, Elisa Yadao. 1994.

University of California Press, Berkeley. \$30.

326 pages plus index, appendices, notes and references.

Black/white illustrations, charts, and maps.

*Review by Georgia Lee*

Basically, *Voyage of Rediscovery* is a technical book in that the central core contains detailed discussions of sailing maneuvers, sailing without modern instruments, meteorological maps, etc. These data show how Polynesians sailed across the Pacific without benefit of navigational instruments. But the book also is about the revelation that has occurred for Hawaiians and other Polynesians who have had--as a result of the voyages--a portion of their forgotten past returned to them. It is a significant work, particularly for those with an interest in Polynesian migrations.

In Chapter 1, "Without Ships or Compass", the history of discovery in the Pacific and the earlier thinking about Polynesian colonization are reviewed. It was Thor Heyerdahl and Andrew Sharp who challenged the general thinking on migration and discovery. Heyerdahl's view had the Polynesians stemming from two separate migrations from the American mainland, whereas Sharp accepted the view that Polynesians came from the Asian side of the Pacific but, rather than intentionally colonizing their ocean world, they found their way from island to island by being blown off course or by floating aimlessly around the ocean in the hope of being cast ashore on an uninhabited island.

The response of archaeology was to search the islands and dig for evidence indicating how the islands were settled. These efforts have confirmed that Polynesia was settled from the West and migrations have been traced by the presence of Lapita pottery in early sites. The Lapita people were ancestors of those who became Polynesian in and around Fiji, Tonga and Samoa.

However, hard information that would either refute or confirm Sharp's hypothesis of drift vs deliberate sailing was lacking; voyaging canoes and traditional navigators had long since disappeared from East Polynesia.

Chapter 2, "Experimental Voyaging", describes the creation and testing of replica sailing canoes. The first to be constructed, *Nalehia*, confirmed that double-hulled canoes could sail to windward. The second, *Hokule'a*, was modified for heavy seas and, although built of modern materials, it was a traditional design. But knowledge of how to steer by stars and waves had been lost in Hawai'i. A master navigator from Satawal, where ancestral systems are still in use today, became the pilot on this voyage.

Here the book outlines non-instrument methods for navigation, orientation and course setting, keeping on a course via star observations, and making landfall by subtle clues such as ocean swells, floating debris and the appearance of birds.

*Hokule'a* sailed on May 1, 1978 from Maui and reached Tahiti after 32 days at sea. The return took 22 days. This voyage demolished Sharp's limits on Polynesian voyaging capabilities and is a classic example of experimental archaeology.

In "Cultural Revival", Chapter 3, how the canoes and voyages served as vehicles for cultural revitalization among Hawaiians and other Polynesians is discussed, as is the 1980 voyage to Tahiti. This time the *Hokule'a* was navigated entirely by a Hawaiian, Nainoa Thompson, whose methods of navigation are described in detail.

Chapter 4, "More than Halfway Around the World", tells how *Hokule'a* sailed through Polynesia in six weeks short of two years. At key points it was necessary to wait for seasonal wind shifts in order to continue on to the next landfall. Here we are provided with a discussion of wind patterns and seasonal variations. A summary of the voyage is outlined in segments from one island group to another. The following Chapter, "Wait for the West Wind," is adapted from an article by the same title that appeared in the *Journal of the Polynesian Society* and is notable for its discussions regarding the ways that Polynesians exploited the periodic spells of westerly winds.

Chapter 6, "Voyage to Aotearoa", concentrates on the most difficult portion of this route, from Rarotonga to Aotearoa (New Zealand). However, the voyage showed that it was possible to intentionally sail a double canoe between those two points. It took 16 days to cover 1,650 miles. The Polynesians must have been highly motivated to sail so far into such cold and hazardous seas.

"Sailing Back and Forth between Hawaii and Tahiti", Chapter 7, describes *Hokule'a's* third round-trip between Hawaii and Tahiti and the problems that arose--and were solved--in going between these widely separated island groups without instruments or other navigational aids.

Chapter 8, "Putting Voyaging back into Polynesian Prehistory" discusses Lapita studies. Archaeologists are now looking at island societies of West Polynesia as part of inter-island voyaging and flows of goods and peoples. This chapter applies findings from the *Voyage of Rediscovery* to problems and issues about Polynesian colonization and past settlement voyaging and suggests that there could have been many voyages of colonization into eastern Polynesia. The idea of trading and two-way voyages also is explored and the point is made that this region should be thought of as a conglomeration of contiguous and near-contiguous archipelagoes, not dispersed lone islands and isolated archipelagoes. The authors examine the reasons for setting forth from an island: famine, defeat in war, the lure of empty lands, and the Polynesian emphasis on primogeniture. As for Rapa Nui, it is suggested that the culture looks different because, over centuries, there was no opportunity to share ideas and experiences.

Possibilities for sailing onward to continental shores (the Americas or Australia) are presented; if any Polynesians did make such a voyage--and found a friendly reception--their culture would not have survived intact.

The authors calculate the staggering cost in human lives of voyages of exploration:

"... some idea of the human costs can be gained by estimating that around ten voyaging canoes each year carrying at least twenty-five people were lost

every year on exploring and colonization missions and on post settlement voyages of various kinds. Over, for example, the 2,000 year span from 250 BC to 1750 AD, the toll would add up to half a million."

Chapter 9, "The Family of the Canoe", jumps into the conflict regarding whether or not legends can be considered valid or, as some suggest, wholly fictitious metaphors and justification for power moves or means of aggrandizing local chiefs. Quoting Glyn Daniel that while "Myth is an invented story. . . legend, on the other hand, has a basis in history, however confused and obscured by later additions." The authors note that in recent times the scholarly view considers traditions to be mythical fictions become fashionable. But at times archaeology has found evidence supporting some legends in the Polynesian outliers and now a few archaeologists working in Hawai'i have called for re-opening the search for archaeological evidence that might bear on this issue.

The original *Hokule'a* was conceived and built to test long distance voyaging between Hawai'i and Tahiti with the idea that eventually the canoe would become a floating classroom for Hawaiian children. However, those who learned to sail were not about to stop and thus what began as a project to settle a scholarly controversy has evolved into a culturally invigorating celebration of Polynesian voyaging and a revived enthusiasm for the sea. It has enabled Hawaiians to relive the legendary voyaging exploits of their ancestors, and has created insights into this oceanic chapter of humankind's spread over the planet.

Polynesian sailing is alive and well, as this book so clearly portrays. Another set of voyages is planned for the future, this time using a 52 foot double-hulled Polynesian canoe built of traditional materials and named *Makali'i* (Pleides); it will be accompanied by the *Hokule'a* and *Hawai'i Loa* (another double-hulled canoe, similar to *Hokule'a*) for a voyage to Ra'iatea and Tahiti where they will all rendezvous with canoes from New Zealand, the Cook Islands, and Tahiti for a "first gathering" of canoes. Tentative plans are being made for a later voyage by *Hokule'a*, *Hawai'i Loa* and *Makali'i* to the west coast of America to share with coastal native Americans and to visit with communities of Polynesians now living along that coast.

Sailors will love this book; however, one doesn't need to be into sailing to enjoy it. Lucidly written, there is serious and thoughtful material here about migrations and settlement. Finney *et al.* have achieved a remarkable example of experimental archaeology. The sailing capabilities of the Polynesians are no longer a matter of speculation, and that there has been a cultural revival is a serendipitous consequence. The final chapter of Polynesian sailing may still be in the offing.



*Archaeological Investigations at Anakena, Easter Island.* Edited by Arne Skjolsvold. 1994. The Kon-Tiki Museum, Occasional Papers. Vol. 3, Oslo. Softcover, 216 pages, maps, black and white line drawings and sketches, photographs. No index. In English. Price: US \$29 plus

freight. *Kon Tiki Museum, Bygdøynesveien 36, N-0286, Oslo, Norway*

*Reviewed by Frank G. Bock, Ph.D.*

There is little doubt that one of the most dramatic sites on Easter Island is the reconstructed *ahu* at Anakena with its commanding *moai* silently gazing inward. In the 1970s, the local archaeologist and former Governor of Rapa Nui, Sergio Rapu, conducted an extensive excavation and restoration of Ahu Nau Nau, placing rather complete and also fragments of *moai* on the platform. After the work of excavation, the area was returned to its natural state, thus covering up the crucial evidence of earlier culture phases.

In 1986-87, another and even more extensive excavation was conducted at the site, the intent being to reopen certain trenches dug by Rapu, and to ascertain more data concerning the cultural remains buried beneath the sand and soil. Skjølsvold's publication is an excellent account of this investigation.

The introductory material, although somewhat truncated, is well written and needed [especially by the general public] prior to reading the text. The author's descriptive passages are complete and comprehensive, detailed, and well referenced with illustrations. However, here comes a caveat: most of the photographs in the volume are dark and rather hazy, lacking good, sharp definition. This is especially irritating when seeking graphic substantiation of the referenced material. Since the text is so well written, it does seem a shame that the photography does not match it in professional quality.

On the other hand, the numerous sketches and maps are excellent, detailed and accurate. Almost makes up for the poor photos.

The author has turned to excellent sources for references and prior work. One error does stand out: he mentions Lee's watershed publication--*Rock Art of Easter Island*--and even recommends it. Unfortunately the textual reference gives it a date of 1993. It is correct in the References as 1992, so look not for the missing volume! One other publication this reviewer would suggest that might have given an insight into Skjølsvold's work would be *Easter Island Earth Island* by Bahn and Flenley [Thames and Hudson, 1992].

The field work conducted by the crew, and discussed by the author, reads like a text-book example of correct archaeological investigation. Trenching was quite extensive revealing a composite picture of the totality of earlier *ahu* construction and its relationship to the cultures responsible. Stratigraphic profiles are well defined, and the trait list of artifacts provides an extensive, well-documented scrutiny needed for possible future study and interpretation.

The evidence discussed ranges from the most obvious--such as features--to the most mundane, which includes chips and powdered *moai* tuff indicating on-site statue manufacturing or at least alteration and finishing. There were enough osteological deposits to give good insight into food sources, and the hundreds of tools recovered provide a

graphic illustration of cultural activity.

The data point out the various phases of *ahu* construction, each with its own distinct architecture, with strong probabilities concerning which platforms were used for *moai* from Rano Raraku. The controversy surrounding whether or not the Rapa Nui practiced cannibalism is discussed in the light of the amount of burned human bone located among the bones of edible prey. Abundant small statues, heads and fragments, as the author points out, are understandable considering the many phases of *ahu* construction.

Although there is certainly some conclusive evidence to be noted, certain results from the lab work indicate discrepancies. Consequently Skjølsvold points out that because of this ambiguity, some conclusions must remain speculative.

His conclusions are sound, based on the data collected. There is one problem: he makes a case for the Polynesian rat found in the lower levels of the excavation, then turns around and repeats the extremely controversial idea of South American contact and settlement. He bases this on the work of Heyerdahl, and again pushes the connection between the temple wall friezes in Peru with their birdman-like figures and the birdman motif found on Rapa Nui. However, Skjølsvold does not make a strong plea--a mere two pages plus two photos. This half-hearted effort seems more like a conventional bow to Heyerdahl than a personal conviction.

Part II of the book, written by Helene Martinsson-Wallin and Paul Wallin, discusses the Settlement/Activity Area around Nau Nau East at Anakena. Although there is, of necessity, some repetition with Skjølsvold's work, this is a valuable supplement, focusing on cultural and settlement patterns as illustrated by the data collected from trenching east of the *ahu*. The lack of total and absolute data results in some speculation, which is a major point in their favor. Future lab work will no doubt reveal information that presently is not fully understood.

Again the reader will be rewarded with detailed work written in an excellent report. The photographs are a bit better than the earlier ones, and the drawings and maps are superb, adding graphic evidence. It is well cataloged, providing future study a strong base for study. The authors' statistical analyses are exemplary, a well-founded key to 'final' interpretation.

Their conclusions indicate that the entire area was probably a settlement for priests and/or leaders. The burial in trench N quite possibly indicates that the area was a holy ground, partially substantiated by refuse pits used as ceremonial sites. Spatial relationships are discussed, with a view toward artifact distribution and its possible meaning. Another point well taken is a learned discussion of what was **not** found; fish hooks and other material that might well have been taboo.

Some modern intrusions, including the Heyerdahl expedition of 1955-56, have disturbed some of the site, and the recent crews had to ascertain the extent of this activity and separate it from their own investigation. Exercising professional caution they perhaps best sum up their work